

Week #1, Session #2: Poems and Questions

American History

Michael S. Harper

Those four black girls blown up
in that Alabama church
remind me of five hundred
middle passage blacks,
in a net, under water
in Charleston harbor
so *redcoats* wouldn't find them.
Can't find what you can't see
can you?

Black Cryptogram

Michael S. Harper

When God
Created
The black child
He was
Showing off.

Questions:

1. What is each poem telling us about Black /human history, culture, life, struggle, survival?
How does each of these poems enrich our understanding of the other poem?
2. What emotions does each poem evoke?
3. What are their poetic features: (images, language, rhythm, rhyme, repetition, symbols, metaphors, alliteration, etc.)?
4. Read together, what do they say about the African American experience?